THE GOVERNMENT FALLS, RESISTANCE CONTINUES

Later I heard about the storming of the Winter Palace from many eyewitnesses. A huge crowd of soldiers, sailors, and armed workers assembled at the Palace Plaza. They crossed it, shouting, firing in the air, and brandishing arms, and flowed, like a human river, through the ground floor of the palace. Not a shot was fired in its defense. The women volunteers and military cadets were pushed aside and disarmed, and the mass of men continued to move from one suite to another. When they reached the room where the government was in session, they declared its members under arrest.

Telegrams were pouring in from the echelons Cheremissov had stopped, and I was trying to decide how to answer them when General Baranovsky, member of the staff of the front, telephoned to ask me to his private apartment for urgent business. There I found Kerensky and Cheremissov. Kerensky lay on a sofa in a state of complete prostration, Cheremissov was pacing the room with an air of authority. I asked Kerensky why he had stopped the expedition of echelons to the capital after having himself called for troops. He answered, "General Cheremissov is in command. I have appointed him Supreme Commander of all fronts. Ask him." Cheremissov interrupted him unceremoniously. "You *promised* to appoint me but you have not signed the order. I stopped the echelons on your order."

It was impossible to be angry with Kerensky—he was in a state of collapse. But there was no excuse for Cheremissov, who had used this situation for his own ambitious plans. Calling on General Baranovsky to support me, I tried to explain the situation as I saw it to Kerensky. I told him that all was not lost, that resistance to the assault of the Communists in Petrograd was possible, that many men were ready to risk their lives for the cause of democracy, and that surrender at this moment would be treason. Cheremissov only shrugged his shoulders and murmured, "That is not how I see things."

An hour later Kerensky withdrew his order to stop the movement of the echelons and signed a dozen new orders and appeals to army commanders, soldiers, railroad officials, and so forth. He also appointed General Krasnov commander of all forces operating against the rebels in Petrograd. Leaving Kerensky under the tutelage of General Baranovsky, I returned to my office to disentangle the chaos Cheremissov had created by stopping the echelons. General Krasnov was waiting for me. He was alarmed by Cheremissov's order and thought of treason. I told him what had happened and went to bed to get a few hours of sleep after sixty hours without a moment's rest.